

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ATHENS 02262 111729Z
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C O N F I D E N T I A L ATHENS 2262

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, GR, CY, TU, US
SUB: PRIME MINISTER COMPLETES BRIEFINGS OF OPPOSITION LEADERS
ON THE AEGEAN AND CYPRUS ISSUES

REF: ATHENS 2165

BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED

1. ON MARCH 10 PRIME MINISTER CARAMANLIS MET SEPARATELY WITH
OPPOSITION LEADERS GEORGE MAVROS, PRESIDENT OF THE UNION OF THE
DEMOCRATIC CENTER (UDC), AND ANDREAS PAPANDREOU, PRESIDENT OF THE
PANHELLENIC SOCIALIST MOVEMENT (PASOK), AND COMPLETED HIS BRIEF-
INGS OF THE OPPOSITION ON THE CYPRUS AND AEGEAN ISSUES, AS WELL
AS OTHER DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL ISSUES. FOLLOWING THEIR
RESPECTIVE MEETINGS WITH THE PRIME MINISTER, MAVROS ISSUED A
STATEMENT AND PAPANDREOU MET WITH THE POLITICAL EDITORS OF THE
ATHENS PRESS. THEIR REMARKS ARE ONE OF THE MAIN STORIES IN MOST
NEWSPAPERS TODAY (MARCH 11).

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 ATHENS 02262 111729Z

2. IN HIS STATEMENT, MAVROS SAID NOTHING NEW HAD COME OUT OF HIS
MEETING WITH THE PRIME MINISTER AND BOTH THE CYPRUS AND AEGEAN
ISSUES REMAINED DEADLOCKED OR, AS HE SIAD THE PRIME MINISTER PRE-
FERRED TO DESCRIBE IT, AT A STANDSTILL. MAVROS THEN REAFFIRMED THE
UDC'S POSITION ON THESE TWO PROBLEMS--A SETTLEMENT ON CYPRUS MUST
BE IN ACCORD WITH UN RESOLUTIONS AND THE AEGEAN PROBLEMS MUST
BE SETTLED ON THE BASIS OF INTERNATIONAL LAW (EXISTING TREATIES

AND PRACTICES). IN THIS RESPECT GREEK POLICY, HE SAID, SHOULD BE
UNYIELDING BECAUSE IT IS A QUESTION OF GREECE'S SOVEREIGN RIGHTS
CONCERNING WHICH THERE CAN BE NO COMPROMISE. MAVROS REITERATED HIS
CALL FOR DISCUSSION OF THESE ISSUES IN THE PARLIAMENT WHICH, HE
SAID, WOULD STRENGTHEN THE GREEK POSITION.

3. IN HIS MEETING WITH THE POLITICAL EDITORS PAPANDREOU SAID HE
DISAGREED WITH THE PRIME MINISTER'S DESCRIPTION OF THE SITUATION AS
BEING AT A "STANDBY" AND AGREED INSTEAD WITH THE MAVROS CHARA-
CTERIZATION OF DEVELOPMENTS AS BEING AT A "DEADLOCK". HE ALSO
OPPOSED THE GOG'S REFUSAL TO DISCUSS THESE TOPICS IN PARLIAMENT
ALTHOUGH HE ACKNOWLEDGED THE PRIME MINISTER PROMISED TO BRIEF THE
PARLIAMENT AS SOON AS SOMETHING NEW DEVELOPED. PAPANDREOU INDICATED
THAT HE HAD REITERATED TO THE PRIME MINISTER PASOK'S CRITICISM OF
THE GOVERNMENT'S HANDLING OF BOTH THE CYPRUS AND AEGEAN ISSUES,
SAYING THAT NEGOTIATIONS ARE THE WRONG TACTIC. ONLY IF TURKEY
RECOGNIZES THAT THERE ARE CERTAIN BASIC GREEK POSITIONS WHICH, IF
VIOLATED, WILL LEAD TO A STRONG RESPONSE, WILL IT BE POSSIBLE TO
HAVE ASSURANCES THERE WILL BE PEACE. IN CONNECTION WITH THE DISCUS-
SION ABOUT RELATIONS WITH TURKEY, PAPANDREOU SAID HE HAD POINTED
OUT TO THE PRIME MINISTER THAT PASOK VIEWED THE CLIFFORD VISIT
AS AN INITIAL STEP IN FURTHERING U.S. OBJECTIVES IN THE AREA.

4. PAPANDREOU INDICATED THAT IN HIS MEETING WITH THE PRIME MINIS-
TER THEY HAD ALSO DISCUSSED OTHER MATTERES AS WELL. HE HAD REFERRED,
HE SAID, TO PRESS TORIES THAT FRANCE WAS TAKING A HARDER POSITION
WITH RESPECT TO THE ADMISSION OF NEW MEMBERS INTO THE EUROPEAN
COMMUNITY AND CLAIMED THESE REPORTS INDICATED THAT PROBLEMS HAD
ARISEN OVER GREECE'S ENTRY. THE PRIME MINISTER, HE ACKNOWLEDGED,
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PAGE 03 ATHENS 02262 111729Z

DID NOT SHARE THIS VIEW.

5. THE GOG DID NOT ISSUE ANY ANNOUNCEMENT BEFORE OR AFTER THE
PRIME MINISTER'S MEETINGS WITH MAVROS AND PAPANDREOU. SUBSEQUENTLY,
HOWEVER, IN RESPONSE TO THE REMARKS BY THE TWO OPPOSITION LEADERS
ABOUT THEIR MEETINGS WITH CARAMANLIS, A GOVERNMENT SOURCE COMMENTED
THAT "THE OPPOSITION USES EVEN RESPONSIBLE INFORMATION IT IS
GIVEN ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF NATIONAL ISSUES AS AN OPPORTUNITY TO
STATE ITS VIEWS UNILATERALLY, ALTHOUGH THE GOVERNMENT HAS RE-
PEATEDLY REFUTED THEM."

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6. COMMENT: COMMENTS WE HAVE BEEN HEARING FROM OTHER POLITICAL
LEADERS AND FROM GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS ARE PRETTY MUCH IN AGREEMENT
WITH THE PRIME MINISTER'S CHARACTERIZATION OF THE SIGUATION WITH
RESPECT TO THE CYPRUS AND AEGEAN ISSUES, ACCORDING TO MAVROS AND
PAPANDREOU, AS BEING AT A STANDBY. EVERYBODY HERE IS WAITING, OF
COURSE, FOR THE MARCH 31 INTERCOMMUNAL TALKS ON CYPRUS IN VIENNA.

THERE IS NO GREAT OPTIMISM, HOWEVER, THAT THEY WILL MAKE MUCH PROGRESS. GREEKS THINK EVERYTHING WILL DEPEND ON TURKISH GOOD FAITH AND THEY POINT TO RECENT STATEMENTS BY DENKTASH AS GIVING LITTLE ENCOURAGEMENT IN THIS RESPECT.

7. ACCORDING TO MFA SOURCES, INCLUDING FOREIGN MINISTER BITSIOS, THERE HAS BEEN NO MOVEMENT ON THE AEGEAN ISSUES SINCE THE MEETING OF THE FOREIGN MINISTERS IN STRASBOURG AND THE CONTINENTAL SHELF TALKS IN LONDON. NO DATE HAS BEEN SET AS YET FOR THE NEXT ROUND OF SHELF TALKS WHICH ARE SUPPOSED TO RESUME IN PARIS THIS MONTH, TURKISH AMBASSADOR TO GREECE TEZEL HAS YET TO DELIVER A TURKISH COUNTERPROPOSAL ON THE AIR SPACE QUESTION AS PROMISED IN STRASBOURG, ACCORDING TO THE GREEKS.

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